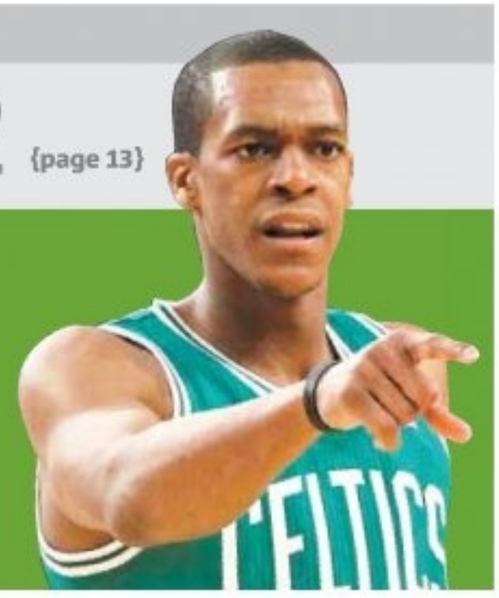
LETTERS@METRO.US

CELTS WITHOUT RONDO IN GAME 2 {page 13}



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BOSTON
Tuesday, May 1, 2012

Is it Roslindale or Roswell? You decide

Mysterious booms, flashes during the weekend witnessed from Dorchester Fields Corner to Jamaica Plain ◗ Police, fire reportedly respond but find nothing ◗ Could this unexplained phenomenon be part of a larger, nationwide conspiracy? {page 02}

FEDERAL REALTY

Groundbreaking. Assembly Row

▶ This artist's rendering shows what Somerville's Assembly Square will look like when the Assembly Row project is completed in 2014.

The city of Somerville and the MBTA broke ground yesterday on a massive revitalization project that will include hundreds of thousands of square feet of office, residential, retail and entertainment space, along with a new T station on the Orange Line. The popular Swedish furniture chain Ikea is also slated to open in the area, which could create some interesting issues with passengers transporting packages on the subway. {page 04}

Metropolitik

Meet the GOP's 'heartless' budget wizard

◗ Paul Ryan's plan to prevent austerity involves cutting the social safety net ◗ In other words: Austerity {page 06}

Omens and opportunities

'Mildred Pierce' screenwriter Jon Raymond on his new book, 'Rain Dragon' {page 09}

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1

In the news

No. 3

If you're a lady in the Hub, you're in the right place. According to a new study, Boston is the nation's third-best place for women's well-being. The study, by the Social Science Research Council's Measure of America Project, was based on three components: healthy life, school enrollment/degree attainment and standard of living. METRO

Today's local tweet

"My commute is 5 yr old's dream: car drive, train trip, walk in park (see ambulances, boats), subway. All that's missing is firetruck. #mbta"

@HONEYBEARTOM PUTTING A POSITIVE SPIN ON HIS DAILY COMMUTE ON THE MBTA

Andino

Woman guilty of knife attack for parking spot

BOSTON. A Mission Hill woman was found guilty yesterday of stabbing her neighbor during a fight over a parking spot.

Carmen Andino, 40, was convicted of assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, authorities said. She will be sentenced next week.

The 24-year-old victim shoveled out her space in the winter of 2010, left and returned to find tables filling the spot. She moved the tables and parked there, which upset Andino.

The women became involved in a fight, and Andino slashed the woman's face and torso with a knife. METRO

Chuck Turner appeal set

BOSTON. A panel of judges will hear next week the oral arguments for the appeal by former City Councilor Chuck Turner.

Turner was sentenced last year to three years in federal prison for attempted extortion and lying to federal agents.

The appeal hearing is set for May 9. METRO

Teen held on bail for punch

FRANKLIN. A Franklin High School student pleaded not guilty yesterday to charges including aggravated assault and battery for his alleged videotaped beating of a fellow student.

David Salmon, 17, was ordered held on $1,500 bail.

Salmon allegedly sucker-punched a fellow student in a hallway. It was videotaped and then uploaded to social media websites.

The teen who filmed the attack is also expected to face charges. METRO/BOSTON.COM

Unexplained sounds, flashes spark rumors

Some say it's just fireworks Residents wonder what the boom is all about Perhaps a PR stunt?

Roslindale may soon be called Roswell-lindale after a series of unexplained sounds and flashes of light were witnessed over the weekend.

Both Friday and Sunday, around the same times, residents reported hearing "booms" in the area of Zeller Street near the Fallon Field.

Some residents said the sound wasn't consistent with the noises made by fireworks during a July 4 celebration.

The mysterious blasts were reportedly heard from Dorchester Fields to Jamaica Plain, but no one had an answer for the strange phenomenon.

Locals reported that police responded to the scene, but found nothing.

Todd Johnson, who has lived in Roslindale for the past year, said the sound startled him and his wife.

"It wasn't like a gunshot, it was louder and deeper than that," said Johnson, who had his television on the first time he heard the strange noise. "It was like a cannon going off."

While others reported seeing a flash following the boom, Johnson said he only heard the loud noise, on both Friday and Sunday night around the same time.

"It's really weird; you'd think there would be some explanation or something," said Johnson. "With fireworks, there would be some smoke or the smell of sulfur — but I don't think any of the neighbors heard anything about that kind of stuff."

On UniversalHub.com, people living nearby joked about the boom being caused by characters from the TV show "Lost" going back to the island, or a possible real-life "Fringe" scenario unfolding in the Hub's backyard.

STEVE ANNEAR
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Best guesses

ZADE ROSENTHAL / MARVEL STUDIOS

Quit playin', Thor.

We can only guess what the noises and flashes were:

- Fireworks
- Bill and Ted's phone booth heading on an Excellent Adventure
- Cast of "Lost" going back to the island
- A meteorite hitting the hills
- Space invasion
- A meth lab explosion
- Stick of M-80 being set off
- Thor running a publicity stunt for "The Avengers"

Booms across the country

BOSTON. Residents in other parts of the country have experienced similar strange noises with no apparent cause in recent months.

In Wisconsin, people called police after they heard thunder-like "booms" and "bams" that officials could not immediately explain.

A 15-minute video on YouTube called "Mysterious Booms All Over U.S. Not Just Wisconsin Jolting People To The Bone," claims it's a conspiracy.

In the video, a person says they have been exploring strange sounds for the past two years, and reports of "loud, jolting booms" all around the country have increased. METRO/SA

Spring. Full bloom

A runner makes his way past a bed of flowers along Day Boulevard in South Boston yesterday.

NICOLAUS CZARNECKI/METRO

May flowers due to get some showers

The month of May will most likely begin with several days of rain, according to the National Weather Service. The NWS 7-Day Forecast shows cloudy skies with a chance of showers through Saturday. Temperatures are expected to hover in the high 40s to low 50s all week, with the exception of Friday, when the thermometer should reach 71 degrees. METRO

Lottery likely to set record

MASSACHUSETTS. Lottery officials expect to break the agency's record with profits already hitting $936 million with three months of reporting left this fiscal year.

Lottery officials said yesterday they expect to have a revised profit estimate for the fiscal year later this week.

The profit boom is largely driven by an increase in instant ticket sales which are up $193 million over last year. In March, instant ticket sales topped $26 million, helping to boost overall lottery sales for the month $45 million higher than March 2011. SHNS

$951M

The current record was set in 2006, when profits topped $951 million.

‘Now we can grieve’

Four years after Northeastern student’s murder, indictments give her parents closure Billerica man pleads not guilty to alleged role in death DA says man drove alleged killer to woman’s Mission Hill apartment

A Billerica man allegedly seeking to satisfy his cocaine addiction drove Rebecca Payne’s alleged murderer to and from her Mission Hill apartment building the night of her death.

Michael Balba, 55, pleaded not guilty in Suffolk Superior Court yesterday. He was indicted on four counts of perjury for allegedly lying about what took place on the night of the murder and was ordered held on $100,000 cash bail.

Payne was a senior at Northeastern University and lived in an off-campus apartment.

She was fatally shot in the knees and chest in May 2008.

Her accused killer, Cornell Smith, and Balba, were indicted last week for their alleged roles in her death.

“His actions are part of the reason it took the district attorney’s office almost four years to bring charges against Cornell Smith,” Suffolk County District Attorney Daniel Conley said. “Had this defendant not lied during that investigation, Becca’s parents might not have had to wait four years to find some measure of accountability in their daughter’s death.”

During Balba’s arraignment, Assistant District Attorney Ian Polumbaum said Balba knew Smith because Smith would supply him with cocaine.

Polumbaum said that on the night Payne was killed, Balba met up with Smith to obtain drugs. Smith told Balba, a truck driver and grandfather, to drive him and another person to Mission Hill and do the drugs in a nearby park, Polumbaum said.

That’s allegedly when Smith killed Payne.

Authorities yesterday confirmed that Payne was killed in a case of mistaken identity and that she was not Smith’s intended target.

Balba then allegedly drove Smith and the other person away from the scene.

During various grand jury investigations, Balba misled jurors and said he could not remember events, authorities said. He agreed to testify with immunity, but said he could not remember the events of that night.

James Dangora, Jr., Balba’s lawyer, said Balba is a family man who works three jobs and has two children and a grandchild that live with him.

MICHAEL NAUGHTON
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AP POOL PHOTO

▶ Authorities said they have cell phone records and surveillance images from cameras near the murder scene that place Balba there.

Other suspect

Cornell Smith allegedly fatally shot Rebecca Payne.

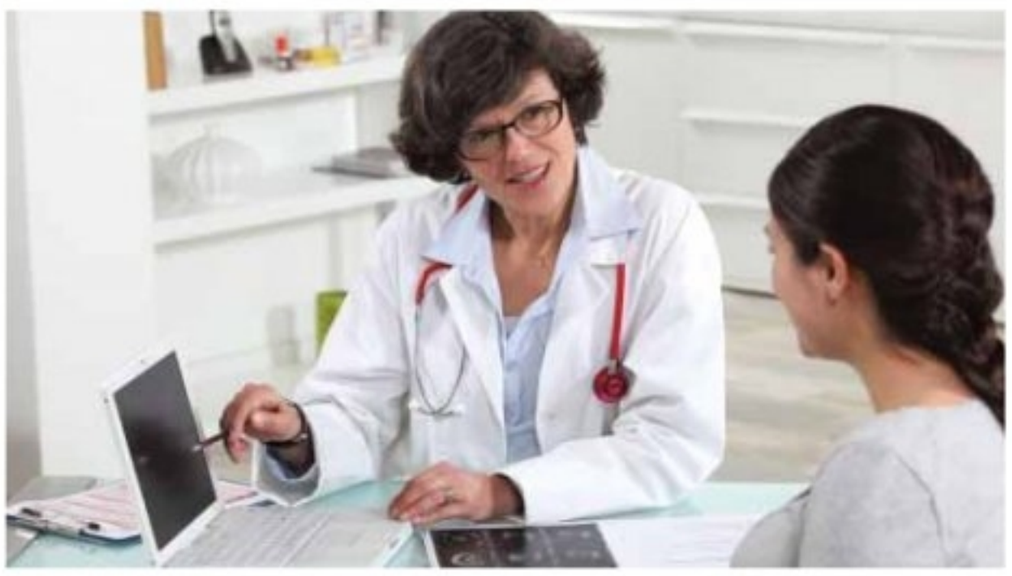
- Smith is being held in federal custody out of state on an unrelated drug charge.
- Suffolk County District Attorney Dan Conley said it is a “cumbersome process” to bring Smith back to Massachusetts to face the murder charges. It could be weeks or months before Smith is arraigned.

Moving forward

Rebecca Payne’s parents cried during yesterday’s arraignment of a man charged with lying about their daughter’s murder.

“We’re still thinking of Rebecca. We’ll never see her again,” her father said.

The couple had visited their daughter’s Mission Hill apartment multiple times on the anniversary of her death. Now they are planning a peace march through the city on May 20, the fourth anniversary.



Are you or someone you know considering breast reconstruction after a mastectomy?

A clinical study designed to evaluate a new tissue expansion method for women who undergo breast reconstruction is being conducted in the Boston area. The study compares the outcomes of traditional saline tissue expansion to an investigational, remote-controlled, needle-free, tissue expansion system called AeroForm.

For more information, please call **800-240-2747 or go to: www.clinicaltrials.gov** and put in key search term “**AeroForm**” or visit **www.airxpanders.com.**

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Sunday, May 6, 2012

FEDERAL REALTY

▶ Assembly Square will have a drastically new look in a few short years.

Breaking ground on Assembly Row

◐ Project includes new Orange Line station ◐ Space will have housing, offices, retail space, entertainment ◐ Ikea furniture store is slated to be built nearby

If T riders thought the bulky bags of fellow passengers bashing them around was bad, the giant boxes of do-it-yourself furniture that could be on board trains are sure to create an unpleasant commute along the Orange Line.

While Somerville prepares to revitalize the Assembly Square area, breaking ground yesterday on phase one of the Assembly Row development, talks of an Ikea being housed near the new project are still active.

A spokesman for the Swedish furniture store told the Herald last month the company has "approvals" to build but doesn't have a construction timetable.

The Assembly Row and Ikea projects are separate, but nearby.

But if Ikea does arrive, riders could be bunched on the T with unbuilt bedroom sets.

Coming soon

The new area will include:

- A new Orange Line T station
- 1.75 million square feet of office space
- 550,000 square feet of retail
- 65,000 square feet of entertainment
- 450 residential units

Somerville spokesman Tom Champion said if and when the time comes to construct an Ikea near Assembly Row, the company is "sensitive to the issue" as they plan strategies for operating in a more urban environment.

"Ikea is aware of the need to manage the delivery side of the operation in such a way you don't have problems with transit," he said. "They are as eager as anyone to make transit an ally."

Champion said Ikea has permits to build, but has not indicated when they will begin.

MBTA officials don't seem concerned about the prospect of passengers piling on public transit with oversized boxes, however.

"We trust that our customers will exercise good judgment in deciding whether a subway car is the proper mode of transport for their purchases," said Joe Pesaturo, spokesman for the MBTA.

Pesaturo said the T "looks forward to providing service to everyone who chooses to live and shop around the new Orange Line station."

STEVE ANNEAR
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BU to set up sexual assault prevention center this fall

NICOLAUS CZARNECKI/METRO

▶ Several sexual assaults and a hazing incident prompted the need for the center, a BU official said.

Boston University President Robert Brown sent an e-mail to students on Monday telling them the school would be forming a center to combat sexual assault on campus in the wake of several unsettling incidents at the school this year.

According to the letter to coeds, sent out by Brown, BU will create a center "specifically dedicated to preventing sexual assault through training and outreach."

The center will be run by the Student Health Services department and will have a new location, separate from the Student Health Services offices.

Brown said the goal is to have the center operational by the beginning of the 2012-2013 academic year.

"We are committed to working to ensure that our academic community is one in which uncivil, violent or abusive treatment of others is not tolerated and that we have the appropriate means in place both to reduce the likelihood of such events and to provide strong support to those affected when, despite our best efforts, such events occur," Brown said in his letter.

STEVE ANNEAR

Centered around controversy

- In his letter, BU President Robert Brown cited four recent incidents which sparked a need for the new center.
- The center will deal with both sexual assault prevention and hazing prevention.
- A hazing incident in April involving a fraternity off campus and BU students led to an investigation by police and campus officials.
- Two alleged sexual assaults also preceded the announcement of the new center.

Abuse claims unfounded

BOSTON. The Archdiocese of Boston yesterday announced that the sexual abuse allegations against a priest were found to be unsubstantiated.

The Rev. John Mendicoa was accused of sexually abusing a boy. He had been placed on administrative leave since last August while the claims were investigated.

He is now on restricted service, the archdiocese said. **METRO**

Steve Carrell to film in Mass.

MARSHFIELD. Actor Steve Carrell, of "The Office" fame, could be shooting a film in his hometown on the South Shore this summer.

According to Boston.com, Carrell will be heading to Marshfield in June to start working on "The Way, Way Back," a dramatic comedy.

The movie is about "a young boy coping with an inattentive mom and a scoundrel stepdad." **METRO**

Ducks rescued from sewer

ARLINGTON. Three ducklings that fell through a storm drain on Monday were later rescued and brought to safety by animal rescue officials.

According to a WBZ report, the mother duck and her nine ducklings were walking near a busy intersection when three of the animals slipped into the sewer grate.

DPW was notified and the ducklings were reunited at a local pond. **METRO**

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Carnival

Congressmen from Tea Party collecting big bucks from bailed-out banks

Tea Party favorites such as Stephen Fincher of Tennessee were swept into Congress on a wave of anger over government-funded bailouts of banks.

Now those incumbents are collecting thousands of dollars for re-election campaigns from the same Wall Street firms whose excesses they criticized. They have taken no significant steps to curb them or prevent future taxpayer-financed rescues.

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Stephen Fincher

Republican freshmen have made clear their disdain for expanding government, and openly opposed a financial regulatory overhaul enacted by Democrats in 2010 before the newcomers arrived in Washington. Their ranks include 10 Tea Party-backed freshmen on the House Financial Services Committee, part of a force that won election in a populist backlash to government spending that included emergency lending to major banks and bailout of firms including U.S. automakers.

Still, the lawmakers haven't passed, considered or even introduced legislation to address concerns about "too-big-to-fail" banks voiced by members of both parties and such Federal Reserve bank presidents as Richard Fisher of Dallas and Jeffrey Lacker of Richmond, Va.

"I haven't seen any of them putting forth legislation on breaking up the big banks or on other things that would genuinely prevent a bailout next time," said Marcus Stanley, policy director of Americans for Financial Reform. **BLOOMBERG**

Obama aide says drone strikes legal

▶ A U.S. drone

GETTY IMAGES

The deadly U.S. campaign of drone strikes against al Qaeda is fully legal under international law, President Barack Obama's counterterrorism chief insisted yesterday in the most extensive justification to date of the controversial tactic that has eliminated some of the most-wanted militants.

Speaking on the eve of the one-year anniversary of the U.S. killing of Osama bin Laden in a raid in Pakistan, the White House aide, John Brennan, said the U.S. administration holds itself to a "rigorous" review process in deciding on drone targets in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

The bin Laden commando raid and unmanned air strikes in Pakistan have severely strained relations between Washington and Islamabad.

"I'm here today because President Obama has instructed us to be more open with the American people about these efforts," Brennan said. **REUTERS**

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Darren Durlach

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MOTHER'S DAY GUIDE

GET YOUR METRO ON MAY 3, 2012

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It's Ryan's world, we just work in it

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POLITICAL WORLDLINESS FOR AN IMPOLITE WORLD

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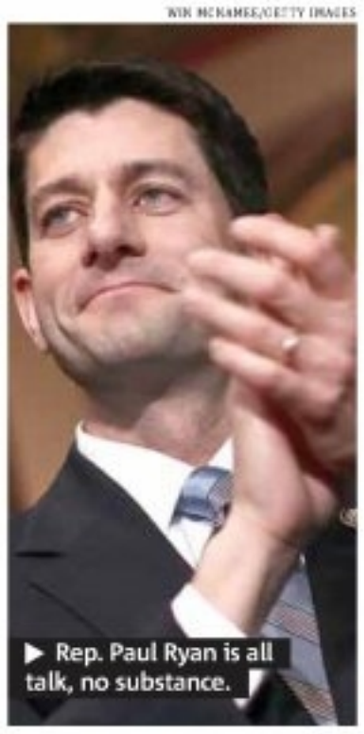
Happy Paul Ryan Day! Inspired in part by a pair of profiles at The New York Times and New York Magazine, the Internet was abuzz yesterday with analysis of this mysterious young "gym rat" who "strolls the halls of Capitol Hill with the anarchist band Rage Against the Machine pounding through his earbuds" and "noodles catfish, catching them barehanded with a fist down their throats."

He's also the reigning king of the Republican party. But don't take our word for it. Says Republican Rep. Tom Cole: "Paul Ryan effectively captured the republican presidential candidates." (His radical budget proposal offers candidates little wiggle room.) And here's Grover Norquist, another right-wing ideologue with a stranglehold on the GOP, elevating Ryan's status above that of Mitt Romney: "We want the Ryan budget. ... We just need a president to sign this stuff."

WIN MCNAMEE/GETTY IMAGES



▶ Rep. Paul Ryan is all talk, no substance.

(Again, the implication suggests that Romney's qualifications are irrelevant; all he need do is sign the Ryan plan, which he's promised to do, if elected, as soon as possible.)

So, what does Ryan want? And what, therefore, do we get if we elect a Republican into the presidency? Let's put it this way: You'd do well to get upwardly mobile relatively quickly.

"The choice before us could not be more clear," Ryan said this past Thursday. "Continuing down the path we are on would mean becoming the first generation to break faith with the American legacy of leaving the next generation with more ... greater opportunities than our parents left us."

And how does Ryan propose to uphold that great American faith? To start, he'll cut taxes for the rich. In addition, military spending will go up. To pay for all this, he — or his Romney surrogate — will repeal Obamacare and take a big chunk out of Medicare, removing tens of millions from the ranks of the insured. Medicaid and other programs will also get severely axed. In other words, in order to ensure the historic American legacy of opportunity, Ryan would give the wealthiest among us a huge windfall and take a torch to programs for the poor.

Asked by Times reporter Jonathan Weisman whether his policies reflect a "heartless" disregard for America's most unfortunate, Ryan brushed the criticism aside: "I'm so used to that by now," Ryan replied. We bet you are, sir. We bet you are.

"We're trying to preempt austerity," Ryan continued. "We want to prevent that bitter kind of European austerity mode, which is what we'll have if we have a debt crisis. I believe that the seeds of a bipartisan compromise are there. But I think we're going to clearly need new leadership in the Senate and the White House to realize that."

What Ryan fails to mention is that we had a bipartisan compromise in the Bowles-Simpson commission. Ryan was on that commission; he voted against it. Despite the massive spending cuts it proposed, Ryan opposed any tax increase on the wealthy. He then accused President Obama of ignoring the committee's recommendations.

Ryan seems to want to prevent austerity by implementing austerity. (Look it up: Austerity: "A policy of deficit-cutting, lower spending, and a reduction in the amount of benefits and public services provided.") Maybe some new leadership can clear this up.

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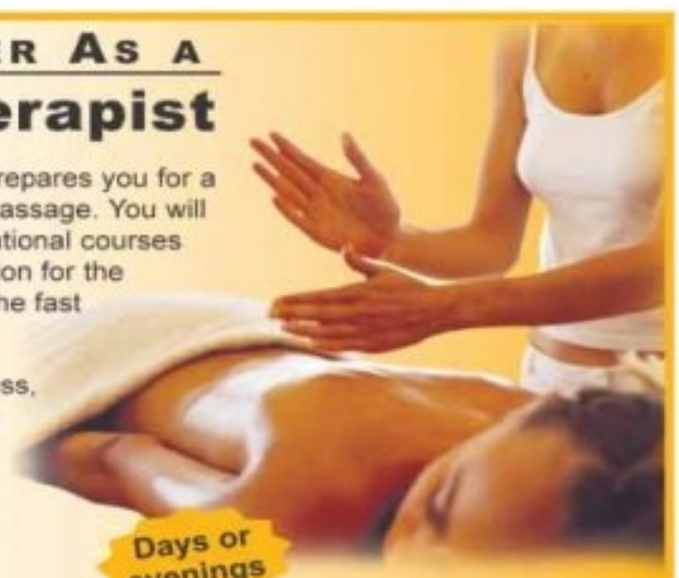

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myentertainment

THE WORD

Metro's **Dorothy Robinson** shares her take on the world of gossip @dorothyatmetro dorothy.robinson@metro.us

Keeping up with E! reality TV

Could it be that a **Kardashian** is actually putting her family's happiness over her reality TV ambitions? The answer is: Maybe! But don't tell her publicist that!

According to a source at Us Weekly, "**Khloe** has pulled the plug," on her E! spin-off series "Khloe and Lamar." The reason, according to TMZ.com, is that **Lamar Odom** wants to focus on reviving his faltering NBA career.

Back from Dallas, where Odom was released from the Mavericks last month, the two "have decided he should train all offseason," the insider tells Us Weekly. "And she's exhausted from filming!"

However, Kardashian's publicist tells Entertainment Weekly: "The show has not been cancelled. It will depend on their schedules, as Lamar's basketball schedule is a priority."

Khloe and Lamar

If the series doesn't return for a third season, at least there's another reality TV show about the trials and tribulations of young married life hitting the network. "Married to Jonas," starring **Kevin Jonas** and his wife, **Danielle**, will follow the couple as they navigate their daily lives at their New Jersey home while juggling his recording and touring schedule and various sets of in-laws.

Here's an idea, E!: Have Khloe and Lamar move next door to the Jonases, get Lamar on the (now Brooklyn) Nets with **Kim Kardashian** ex **Kris Humphries**, and create the most beautiful reality TV mash-up in the world. Thank (and pay) me later.

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Houston and Jackson in 1988

Jackson and Houston: In love?!

Michael Jackson's former bodyguard claims the King of Pop had an affair with **Whitney Houston** in 1991 — and even wanted to marry the late singer. "Whitney practically moved in to Michael's ranch and they had a fling like any other young couple," **Matt Fiddes** tells the Sun. "Michael said later he had always hoped the relationship had gone further, and I know he dreamed of marrying her." Fiddes says the pair had one more run-in at a 2001 tribute concert for Jackson. "They were both a mess, to be honest," Fiddes says of the reunion. "They shared what would be their final hugs and Michael begged Whitney to get off the drugs that were destroying her life." For those keeping track at home, Fiddes is the same former bodyguard claiming to be the biological father of Jackson's youngest child, **Blanket**, insisting that Jackson used Fiddes' sperm to conceive the boy.

Talking points

Everyone is getting worried for J. Simp

It's been more than a week since Jessica Simpson's scheduled due date, and folks are starting to get concerned. Her father, Joe Simpson, took to Twitter to post: "Still counting down the days 'til I am a grandpa again. Keep Jess in your prayers," while pal Katy Perry remarked, "Has Jessica Simpson had that baby yet? I'm getting anxious." Chelsea Handler chimed in as well, saying she's "getting frightened" that Simpson hasn't delivered yet. The pregnant singer was spotted over the weekend with fiance Eric Johnson, taking a notably bumpy drive. Trying to help things along, maybe?

ABC/RANDY HOLMES

▶ Jessica Simpson: Yes, she's still pregnant.

Poehler's son is a 'possessive husband'

With two young sons at home, **Amy Poehler** is enjoying motherhood, but she admits her older boy, 3-year-old **Archie**, is "turning into a possessive husband" as he grows up. "He knows when I'm going out if I'm dressed up or if I have shoes on. Like today, when I was dressed up to come here, he said, 'Where ya going?' I said, 'I'm going out,' and he said, 'With who?'" she tells **David Letterman** during an interview. "I said, 'I'm going to see some friends.' I didn't want to tell him about you. I didn't want to confuse him."

Hutcherson buys the good stuff

"The Hunger Games" star **Josh Hutcherson** — who recently complained that the U.S. drinking age should be lowered to 18 — looked pretty pleased with himself leaving a supermarket in Los Angeles carting a bottle of scotch, according to TMZ. The 19-year-old actor allegedly used a fake ID to purchase a $170 bottle of Macallan. "The age to go to war is 18, so I think the drinking age should be 18 as well," Hutcherson previously told reporters for the website.

Hutcherson

2

The feed ...

▶ Checking in with some of Hollywood's biggest names to see what they've been up to — in their own words, in 140 characters or fewer.

Today, Joan Rivers can't believe her ears, Lindsay Lohan is trying to set the record straight, Simon Cowell isn't comfortable giving a compliment and Albert Brooks is impressed.

@Joan_Rivers
A nightclub patron accused Lindsay Lohan of throwing a drink in her face? Can't be true! Lindsay would never let any booze go to waste.

@lindsaylohan
didn't miss my flight, was always taking a red eye because i was working during the original flight

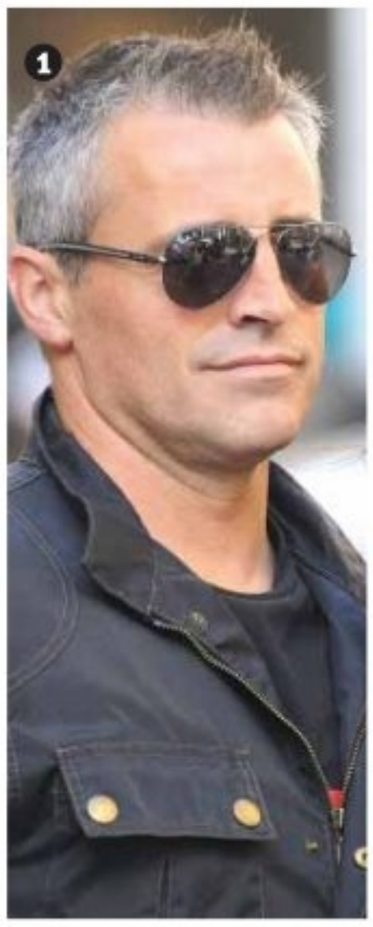
@SimonCowell
Hate to admit that @piersmorgan is a brilliant interviewer

@AlbertBrooks
Two Avengers just came up to my kids on the street and took $50. This movie is going to make a fortune.

Lohan

myentertainment

A pregnant (and tan!) Snooki for your Tuesday



1: **Matt LeBlanc**, sporting an awesome fauxhawk, was snapped outside of Radio 1 on Monday in London, England.

2: Will Arnett and **Maya Rudolph** appeared at The Comedy Awards 2012 at the Hammerstein Ballroom on Saturday in New York.

3: As part of the 2012 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival on Saturday in New Orleans, **Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers** performed.

4: Colin Firth and **Nicole Kidman** attended a photocall to announce the start of filming their new movie, "The Railway Man," on Friday in Edinburgh, Scotland. The 10-week shoot starts now around Edinburgh, moving to Thailand in late May and finally to Australia in early June.

5: A pregnant **Nicole "Snooki" Polizzi** visited the Chicago-area tanning salon, Ultimate Exposure, to promote her new line of tanning lotion on Saturday.

6: Fergie, along with some intense shoulder pads, attended a dinner party hosted by Lucky Magazine on Friday in Pacific Palisades, Calif.

7: Dita Von Teese is the most fashionable woman in any airport, anywhere. Here she is arriving in London from Paris yesterday.

1: SAV/FILMMAGIC
2: THEO WARGO/ GETTY IMAGES
3: DOUGLAS MASON/ GETTY IMAGES
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The seven-year itch

Writer Jon Raymond has penned several screenplays, including the critically acclaimed films 'Old Joy' and 'Wendy and Lucy' His most recent is the Emmy-nominated HBO miniseries 'Mildred Pierce' In his second novel, 'Rain Dragon,' he explores breakups, makeups, moving up and moving on

Acclaimed author and screenwriter Jon Raymond reminds us that the end is always in the beginning. In his sophomore novel "Rain Dragon," a young couple impetuously embarks on a journey of discovery together, trading Los Angeles for a dairy farm outside of Portland, Ore. But, their paths diverge and they come to realize that the life they've romanticized isn't so romantic. Where Amy sees omens, Damon finds opportunities; where Amy sees opportunities, Damon finds himself alone. As they pursue their own niches in their new community, it exposes fissures in their tumultuous seven-year relationship. Raymond asks his readers: Can one sacrifice their ideologies for a greater good? We ask him about taking risks, falling in love and whether the grass on the other side is ever really greener.

Why can't Damon, whose job it becomes to promote better communication in businesses, find the same success in his most intimate relationship?

The influence of New Age thinking has become so commonplace that people often end up articulating their needs and desires in almost exactly the same way they'd write a corporate mission statement. Everything ends up as a forum for self-improvement. I wanted to deal with this broader New Age way of thinking without any kind of irony or judgment attached. Openness and communication are the hallmarks of New Age thinking, [but] there are some things that simply can't be said.

Did you know the trajectory of Damon and Amy's relationship in advance or did you let it unfold as you were writing?

I always knew that the destiny these characters imagined for themselves was not going to be the destiny the universe doled out. The book is about how people fabricate a sense of fate in their lives — that feeling that your actions have some greater meaning, that your story has some special shape. The story takes place over the course of a year, and the characters conform to a circular path. They start where they end, hopefully with more self-knowledge or at least a momentary sense of renewal. We keep doing the same things over and over again and every once in awhile we find ourselves in a new season.

A lot of romantic relationships fail because the people involved stop teaching and learning from one another. How do you avoid stagnation?

So much of our popular culture is fixated on the big, pyrotechnic event of falling in love, the finding of "the one," and pays so little attention to the longer, unfolding work of love. In "Rain Dragon," I wanted to jump past that initial flush and into a relationship at the moment of possible commitment.

GINA ANGELOTTI
gina.angelotti@metro.us

Q&A

Happiness is an abstract idea, and it's different for everyone. Is there something more accessible one might seek?

I tend to frame my own life in the negative. I don't want to do this; I don't want to feel that, thus I'll behave in this way. So my key to happiness is largely evasive. The pursuit of happiness can look unwise at times, just a selfish, acquisitive, hypocritical lifestyle. Being useful to others, putting other people ahead of oneself: That attitude seems to make for happy states of mind.

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Protect your child's heart

The American Academy of Pediatrics recently created new guidelines to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease starting from childhood, including the following recommendations.

Ages 2 and up: Your doctor should measure your child's height, weight and body mass index at every checkup. Have the doctor go over the results with you and, if necessary, explain what diet and activity changes could benefit your child.

Ages 3 and up: Your child's blood pressure should be measured yearly. As with BMI, ask your doctor to discuss the results with you.

Ages 9 to 11: A first cholesterol screening is recommended. Your child may need his or her cholesterol checked sooner if he or she has a parent whose total cholesterol is 240 or over or a close relative who has had a heart attack or stroke before the age of 55 (in males) or 65 (in females).

RACHEL MORRIS

Good conversation with your child's pediatrician may lead to good heart health down the line.

Parents

Parents brings moms and dads smart, fresh advice to help you raise healthy, happy kids. Check us out at Parents.com

Parenting notes

Gak makes a comeback

How to tell you're getting old: Nickelodeon's Gak is getting a relaunch. The newly reformulated squishy goop is less messy, but still fun to make silly noises with. **$6, Toys R Us**

▶ Gak is back!

Time to tune out

Screen-Free Week, which began yesterday and runs through Sunday, is a great time to teach your kids how much fun exists outside the (television) box. Today's youth are extra-reliant on TV, video games, computers and mobile devices for entertainment: Preschoolers amass an average of 32 hours per week in front of a screen, and older kids accrue more time. Visit www.screenfree.org to learn about screen-free events in your area.

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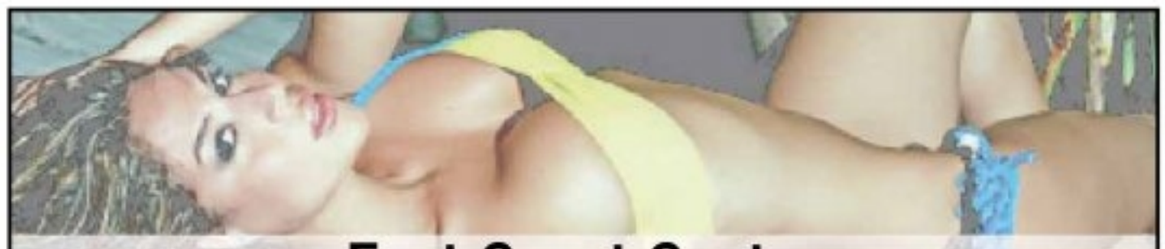

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In defense of the president's policies

President Obama has helped turn America around since 2008. Unlike the GOP agents for the rich, Obama has worked hard to put in programs that benefit the middle class and those trying to get into the middle class. In 2008, thanks to the foolish policies of George W. Bush, America was on the brink of financial ruin. We even heard the word "Depression" being used on the nightly news. We don't hear that word anymore do we? So my question for America is: Who (except for the rich) would vote Republican? Who would want to turn the reins of our government back to the policies of the GOP? Republican policies that always place the wealthy, corporations and the military before the working class and the poor? I think the American electorate has finally seen through the GOP's smoke and mirrors.

LARRY BLONG, VIA E-MAIL

Social Security is a ponzi scheme

RE: "SOCIAL SECURITY WILL CONTINUE TO PAY OUT": It is Elkan Katz's letter that is misleading on Social Security. According to the projections described in the Social Security Trustees Report, the fund is already paying out close to $50 billion more than it takes in, apart from interest. Beginning in 2020, payments will exceed its income — including the interest. By 2033, the fund will be depleted. After that, taxes will only be able to pay about 75 percent of the scheduled benefits. **JIM FLETCHER, VIA E-MAIL**

Right-wing loonies gum up the works

RE: "THE LEAST PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS WILL DO EVEN LESS THAN USUAL!": Commies?! Lefties?! What is this, the 1950s? I'm old enough to remember when people like Mr. St. George and Mr. Tordoff thought fluoridating water to prevent tooth decay was a communist plot. Time for these two to get out of the conservative news echo chamber with their mid-20th century paranoia.

KATHY KOURIAN, BEDFORD

Science is not faith, yon dragon slayer

RE: "FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PAYS FOR SERVICES": St. George, science takes no political sides. Go wallow in your beliefs, just like the church clung with teeth and nails to the geocentric universe model and ignored science for almost 2,000 years. In 2005, some 20 percent of Americans still believed the sun revolved around the Earth! Teaching science is not indoctrination; teaching religion is. What scientific evidence do you have that global warming is a lie? Are you a climatology expert or do you rely on other Bible Belt luminaries who also think the earth was created some 6,000 years ago? Go slay smaller dragons, science is a bit too big for you.

GEORGE MATHIOWITZ, NEWTON

Who do you think pays for Obamacare?

RE: "HEALTHCARE LAW HAS MUCH TO LOVE": How pie-in-the-sky can Ms. Casey be? Why do people like her fail to include who foots the bill for all these great benefits? Do they think the insurance companies take the financial hit? Do they realize how much employers and the insured have to pay for their premiums?

PETER MOLLE, VIA E-MAIL

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Please include your name and contact information.

Horoscope

♉ Taurus **April 20-May 20.** If you decide to get involved in a new endeavor with several other people, make sure you have a voice in the project — as well as a leadership role. Reconsider if you don't.

♊ Gemini **May 21-June 20.** There is nothing wrong with expressing your friendship or love for another with some kind of tangible token. But unless you're extremely close, don't make it anything expensive.

♋ Cancer **June 21-July 22.** As you charm everyone around you, including your adversaries, it will become evident that communication comes quite easily to you. Use this attribute liberally for best results.

♌ Leo **July 23-Aug. 22.** If you have something to sell, it's an excellent time to go after the big account you've been eyeing but have been afraid to approach.

♍ Virgo **Aug. 23-Sept. 22.** Your expansive mood is likely to trigger some of your nobler qualities. With little thought of gain, you're likely to do things that will mean a lot for others.

♎ Libra **Sept. 23-Oct. 23.** When you show people you really care, they, in turn, will automatically be as concerned for your welfare as you are for theirs. Visible demonstrations are likely to come from several sources.

♏ Scorpio **Oct. 24-Nov. 22.** Make extra efforts to show people how much you really care about their welfare. It will help inspire a reluctant person to feel special and offer you valuable help.

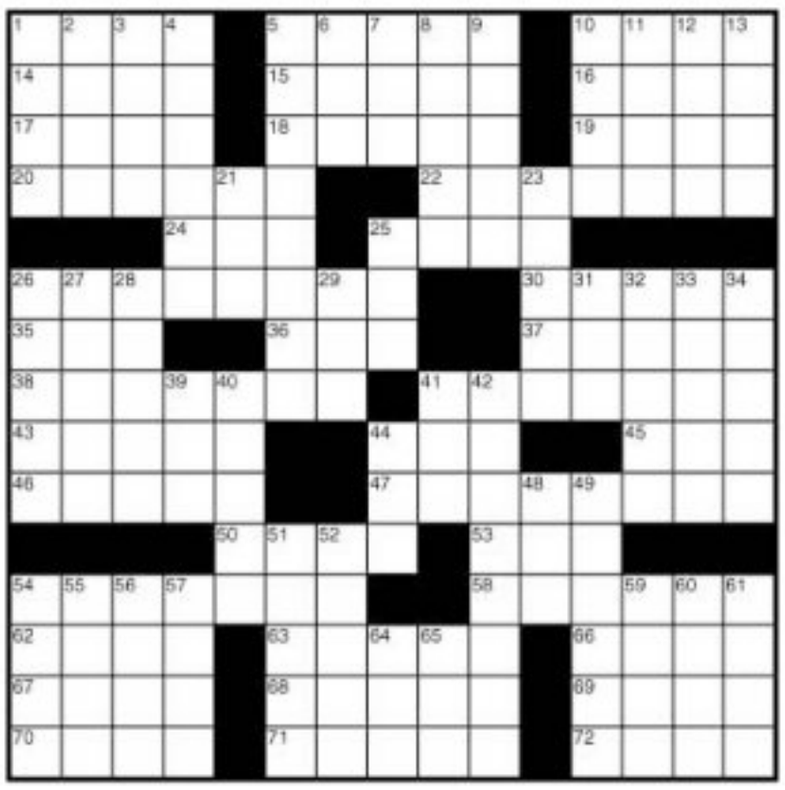
♐ Sagittarius **Nov. 23-Dec. 21.** More opportunities than usual are likely to present themselves, making it possible for you to achieve two ambitious objectives that may or may not be connected.

♑ Capricorn **Dec. 22-Jan. 19.** You have the ability to merge two dissenting voices into one positive, unified force. Without your intervention, the concerned parties are likely to continue bickering between themselves.

♒ Aquarius **Jan. 20-Feb. 19.** Two quality changes are stirring that could help you better yourself career-wise and/or financially. They are apt to be triggered by a couple of unrelated circumstances.

♓ Pisces **Feb. 20-March 20.** Your judgment is much keener than usual, enabling you to correctly evaluate both sides of opposing issues. It will give you an edge over your competition.

♈ Aries **March 21-April 19.** The possibility for gains in your material affairs are stronger than usual at this time, so don't waste the opportunity. In fact, there are likely to be two sources making some good things possible. **BERNICE BEDE OSOL**



Across
1 Sis and bro
5 B-movie crooks
10 Voucher
14 Laze around
15 Commandeer
16 "___ Excited"
17 Lotion additive
18 Town official
19 Black, to Jacques
20 What nature abhors
22 Diplomacy
24 Prefix for cycle
25 Former Chevy
26 "The Jungle Book" panther
30 Do a double-take
35 Caviar, actually
36 Upper house mem.
37 Fragrant wood
38 Sells off
41 Cosmetics buy
43 "Maria __"
44 Lubricate
45 Charged particle
46 Lettuce and such
47 Dance and film (2 wds.)
50 Not very close
53 Starfish arm
54 Jumped for joy
58 Hazardous
62 Start of a famous boast
63 Civilian dress
66 Rockers Jethro __
67 J in JFK
68 Inventor __ Howe
69 Of a historic time
70 After-hours
71 Play banjo
72 Do a fall chore

Down
1 Pole or Czech
2 Town east of Wichita
3 Coalition
4 Private eye
5 Most delicious
6 NASA counterpart
7 Fellow
8 "Grand Canyon Suite" composer
9 Bit of parsley
10 Motion picture
11 RN employers
12 Mother of Horus
13 Shredded
21 Suffix for forfeit
23 DEA agents
25 Roomy vehicle
26 Is an omen of
27 Teresa's town
28 Judge's mallet
29 Home, in the phone book
31 EU forerunner
32 Firefighter Red __
33 Ricochet
34 Prefix with fix or form
39 Actress __ Hartman
40 Nobelist Anwar
41 Cosmonaut space lab
42 Large-heartedness
44 Rowboat need
48 Cooling device
49 Half-shell item
51 Wives, to lawyers
52 Fully grown
54 Sinister
55 Lawless role
56 Appliance
57 Diet
59 Mystique
60 Strong criticism
61 High-fashion mag
64 Flat-needled tree
65 T, in Athens

2					9			
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3		6	7					
			9					5

SUDOKU **LEVEL: EASY**

4				3			7	5
					2			4
				7	4		1	
7	9	8				2		
3		2				8		1
		6				7	3	9
	1		4	2				
2			5					
9	6			8				3

SUDOKU **LEVEL: HARD**

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Solution to yesterday's crossword

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Scottsdale: So hot, it's cool

▶ The W cleverly transforms its pool lounge into a swanky night spot when the sun goes down.

- Don't let the high temperatures scare you
- There's an activity for everyone in this desert hot spot — and plenty of shade

It's been a long time since Scottsdale, Ariz., lived up to it's official nickname: "the West's most Western town." Old Town Scottsdale does have its share of saloon doors and an annual festival celebrating the Pony Express, but for those who take the new with the old, there is something for visitors of every type.

Art galleries, restaurants and shops fill the traditional low-slung, beige buildings of Scottsdale's historic district, where you can snap up artwork and turquoise jewelry made by local artists.

There is no need to fear the triple-digit temperatures that Scottsdale's locals shrug off — nights are cool in the Sonoran Desert, but Scottsdale has a buzzing nightlife that heats up as the temperatures drop. Swanky lounges like the W Hotel's Wet Deck draw crowds of sun-kissed, sharply dressed, beautiful people, while the open architecture brings a laid-back vibe to sports bars like the Upper Deck. And don't worry about over-imbibing: Free golf carts make it easy for revelers to bar-hop at the night's end.

JULIA FURLAN
letters@metro.us

LISA LOVERDO

View from the top

For those who think vertically, a peaceful hot air balloon ride in the early morning is the perfect cure for last night's party. Vistas of the mountain ranges surrounding Scottsdale are breathtaking. For the physically ambitious, Camelback Mountain turns a honey-kissed red as it catches the sunlight in the morning — almost as red as the faces of those tackling the moderately strenuous 1,300-foot hike.

Eat your fill

Luxury hotels and a rabid, year-round golf scene mean that there is a restaurant for every palate in Scottsdale. For diners looking for bright modern design in dish and decor, AZ88 Bar and Restaurant is ideal. A short walk down the Scottsdale Waterfront to Lee's Cream Liqueur ice cream shop will finish off any meal with boozy flair — the Jack Daniels chocolate swirl is a special treat.

Architecturally sound

Scottsdale's architectural landscape mimics the flat, low topography of the surrounding natural environment. Architecture lovers shouldn't miss a tour of Frank Lloyd Wright's famed former home, Taliesin West, which is a bastion of sustainable architecture and design.

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Opinion

MATT BURKE
METRO BOSTON SPORTS EDITOR, @BURKEMETROBOS

THE NBA NEEDS A SLAP TOO

First things, first: Rajon Rondo deserves his one-game suspension. Rondo's biggest knock, and really, the only reason as to why Danny Ainge has ever listened to trade offers regarding the immensely talented sixth-year point guard is this: He is painfully immature.

That could all one day change, of course. One should bet that it will, actually. Paul Pierce, in his seventh NBA year in 2005 was ejected in a pivotal Game 6 playoff game against Indiana. He followed it up by waving his jersey in the air and wrapping a giant bandage around his head in the postgame press conference.

That was more of an immature act than what Rondo did Sunday night.

So there's still room for Rondo to change. That we know.

The other party involved in this passive-aggressive exercise that occurs each and every spring in today's NBA, of course, was official Marc Davis. On that end, there will likely be no alteration in behavior this spring or any spring.

Just three weeks ago, Davis blew call after call in, oddly enough, a Celtics-Hawks game at TD Garden.

Now, I am one of the lone souls remaining that believe David Stern is the best commissioner in sports. Insane, I know.

But it's clear that Stern is also the most stubborn amongst the Selig, Goodell, Bettman crew. After the Tim Donaghy officiating scandal that should have rocked sports for decades, but somehow didn't, one would think that Stern would have made at least a little effort to have his league become just a smidgen more transparent when it comes to questionable calls on the floor.

That hasn't happened. In fact, one could make the case that things are worse than ever.

Explain to us exactly why Metta World Peace was suspended seven games instead of 10? Tell us that your officials made a mistake with a bad goaltending call or a phantom foul at the end of these games. Show the fans all the ways you are trying to improve the situation, instead of always going the Mafia rout and covering up things that don't even need to be covered up.

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Referee Marc Davis and Rajon Rondo won't be exchanging Christmas cards.

The NFL does a very nice job allowing former director of officiating Mike Pereira to explain and question calls DURING NFL broadcasts on FOX. The segments give fans insight into what the referees are thinking on the field. Bad calls remain bad calls, sure. But at least the NFL tries to narrow the fan-to-official gap. They, in fact, humanize their officials. NBA officials, meanwhile are still robots to the fans. And evil ones at that.

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ON TV TODAY

MLB

A'S AT RED SOX
7 P.M., NESN

Belichick dishes on draft picks

Patriots head coach Bill Belichick offered up insight on the newest members of the Patriots yesterday on Sirius XM's "Movin' the Chains" program.

On Syracuse product Chandler Jones, who is also the brother of UFC lightweight champ Jon "Bones" Jones, Belichick noted that Jones matched up well with collegiate tackles now in the NFL and that he was extremely competitive in linebacker drills at the combine. Jones has the versatility to play end in the 4-3 and outside linebacker in the 3-4.

Belichick also spoke on how Alabama's Dont'a Hightower reminded him of Jerod Mayo and Mike Vrabel in different ways. The coach said Hightower is similar to Mayo in football intelligence and leadership and that his versatility could be much like Vrabel's was during his time in New England. METRO

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GETTY IMAGES

Nets unveil stylish logo

The Brooklyn Nets, who officially dumped New Jersey last week, unveiled their new logo yesterday.

Brooklyn's black and white color scheme is a tribute to the old New York subway signage system. METRO

GETTY IMAGES

The Celtics will have to contain Atlanta's Josh Smith tonight.

C's Game 2 keys

Bradley, Pietrus, Dooling, even Moore need so step up Pierce, Garnett need to get back to basics tonight

Three Celtics storylines to watch tonight (7:30, CSNNE) in Game 2:

FILLING RONDO'S VOID

Let's get this out of the way right now: Nobody on the Celtics can do what Rajon Rondo does. His absence for tonight's Game 2 will be apparent, and his selfishness could cost the team a series win over the Hawks. But not having Rondo isn't the end of the world. It doesn't mean the C's will roll over and die. With Rondo in a suit, Avery Bradley will most likely move to the point guard position, while Mickael Pietrus slides into the shooting guard role. The bench becomes thinner, assuming Ray Allen is still out, but players like Keyon Dooling and rookie E'Twaun Moore will have to step up.

THE REAL ISSUE

The Rajon Rondo ejection overshadowed the Celtics' real problem on Sunday: Paul Pierce and Kevin Garnett did not show up to play. Pierce scored just 12 points on 5-19 shooting (0-6 from three-point range). Garnett's stat line doesn't look that bad, 20 points and 12 rebounds, but how about not starting the game 0-for-7 tonight? His poor play in the first quarter of Game 1 contributed greatly to the big hole the C's found themselves in. Rondo or not, if these two can't get it together, the season is over.

TAKE A STEP BACK

Yes, you, Celtics fan who's ready to jump. A lot went right for the Hawks in Game 1. Do you think Atlanta will start the game shooting better than 70 percent for much of the first quarter? The C's know now more than ever that they can't allow the Hawks to get out on the break. They've got to slow the game down. And who knows? With Rondo out, Atlanta could develop a false sense of confidence.

Without Rondo

The Celtics went a very respectable 8-5 this season without Rajon Rondo.

Avery Bradley will likely take Rondo's place at the point. He did not have an assist in Game 1, but did post 10 points.

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Mulu Legecha Haile

Was born on 12th September 1953 in Gonder, Ethiopia. In his early years Mr. Haile was a diligent student, and in 1976 he joined the Ethiopian Democratic Union. In 1986, Mulu Haile left with his family to the United States to pursue a better future. Later he became one of the founding members of the Gonder Development & Cooperation Organization (GDCO), a non-profit organization that provides help to the Ethiopian community. Mulu Haile passed away early morning on Sunday, April 22nd. His legacy as a passionate father, loving husband, and community leader, will be forever remembered. He is survived by his wife, Tsehay Chufa, and his seven children: Almaz, Goesh, Mekedes, Aregash, Rahel, Elsa, and Adam.

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